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L5: Entry 1 of 1

File: USPT

Jun 25, 2002

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 6411897 B1

TITLE: Method to schedule a vehicle in real-time to transport freight and passengers

Detailed Description Text (32):

It is to be expressly understood that the schedules shown in FIGS. 3a-e are examples and are intended only to illustrate the method of the present invention. Other schedules are contemplated under the teachings of the present invention, and can contain more or less information than that shown in FIGS. 3a-e. For example, various color schemes can be employed to indicate additional information. That is, predicted times can appear in red while actual times appear in black. In another embodiment, the actual times can be posted next to the predicted times so that the predicted times can be compared to the actual times for reliability of the predicted times. In yet another embodiment, the current time is displayed in addition to the time the schedule was last updated. Likewise, the time field can also contain the date, a countdown to the next arrival and/or departure of vehicle 150, etc.

Detailed Description Text (35):

In step 400 the host 140 searches the existing route pertinent to the received transportation request. This search is performed in memory 145 (FIG. 1) and more specifically in a route database 145a. Once all available existing routes pertinent to the received transportation request are retrieved, stage 410 is entered to ascertain what whether or not the existing transportation request (these requests can be one or several) can be added to existing routes. If they can be added to existing routes, then stage 420 is entered and these additional transportation requests are added to the existing routes. As will be explained later, with respect to FIG. 5, this determination in stage 410 is one whether or not a passenger seat will be available for a passenger transportation request from the requested pick up to the requested destination and, likewise, freight requirements for a freight transportation request from a requested pick up to a requested destination. If a passenger seat or freight space is available, then in stage 420, the process of the present invention adds the new request to existing routes. If they cannot be added to existing routes because the routes are filled with respect to the transportation request, then stage 430 is entered.

Detailed Description Text (36):

In stage 430, the host 140 looks at the existing route pertinent to the transportation request selected from the route database 145a and performs conventional software analysis determining whether or not the routes can be modified, partially combined together, split (e.g., two routes into three) in order to handle the new transportation request. For example, assume two existing routes are uncovered in step 400 and there are four additional transportation requests for passengers and freight. Upon conventional critical path analysis, it is discovered that modifying the two existing routes by creating three routes from the two and the four transportation requests actually results in three new routes which are at least as profitable as the prior two and, most likely, more profitable. In the modify stage 430, the passenger seat availability for the existing routes and the new route, the freight requirements for the existing routes and the new routes are all considered along with profitability as will be subsequently explained with respect to FIG. 5. If it is possible to modify, then stage 440 is entered and the modification occurs. If not, then the existing routes are left alone and in stage 450 a new route is created for the received transportation requests. If there are

not enough received transportation requests, then stage 210 is re-entered and the whole process repeats until enough received transportation requests are obtained to make a new route in stage 450. In stage 450, the passenger seat availability, the freight requirements, and the profitability of the new route are all considered and, if proper, stage 460 is entered to create a new route. It is to be expressly understood that the process of FIG. 2 and FIGS. 4 and 5 is a continuous and iterative process which may be periodic, aperiodic, or continuously operating in the background of the host 140. From a passenger point of view or from a freight shipment point of view, the destination of each individual transportation request remains the same whether or not the routes are dynamically changing. The goal is to maximize passenger seat usage, ship as much as possible freight, and to receive a maximum profitability figure.

Detailed Description Text (37):

In FIG. 5 and in each 410, 430, and 450, each new transportation request is evaluated as to available passenger seats in stage 510, available freight requirements (i.e., volume and weight) in stage 520, profitability in stage 530 and, if the answer is yes to all three, then adding (stage 420), modification (stage 440), or creation (stage 450) is entered. It is to be expressly understood that many variations on the method presented in FIGS. 4 and 5 can occur. For example, rather than determining profitability in stage 530, this step can be eliminated since having a predetermined number of passenger seats filled in stage 550 and/or the freight requirements fulfilled in stage 520 would indicate profitability without a separate stage. Indeed, it is the combined usage of the passenger seats 510 and the freight space 520 that could achieve a profit value. For example, two or three passengers with eighty percent of the freight space could indicate profitability or ninety percent of the passenger seats filled with twenty percent of the freight requirements utilized could indicate profitability or any suitable combined figure. With respect to using a profitability determination in stage 530, the profit value of each passenger and the profit value of each freight shipment could be determined to arrive at an overall predetermined profit figure for the vehicle traveling the route which would have to be achieved for the travel to occur and the route to be created. It is to be understood that the freight transportation requests include reservations for cubic space (whether or not the space is actually used) in the creation of a route.

Current US Cross Reference Classification (5):

705/6